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Examining the Role of Satisfaction and Brand Love in Generating Behavioral Intention

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Introduction

Behavioral intention has attracted much attention from both the industry and academia (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1972; Baker & Crompton, 2000; Ryu & Han, 2010). As behavioral intention is equated with customers' conative loyalty (Chen & Chen, 2010), investigating behavioral intention can give implications for tourism businesses on how to raise consumers' loyalty and thus lead to profitable development. Behavioral intention includes two dimensions: intention to recommend and intention to revisit (Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1996). The former refers to tourists' favorable comments, which have been seen as an effective marketing approach in the service sector (George & Berry, 1981; Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1993). The latter is defined as the possibility of a tourist participating in an activity or visiting a place again (Baker & Crompton, 2000).

Previous studies have intensively investigated the antecedents of behavioral intention (Williams & Soutar, 2009). Even though satisfaction was found to have a positive impact on behavioral intention, the effectiveness of this impact has been questioned by an increasing number of studies (Jones & Sasser, 1995; Jung & Joon, 2012; McKercher, Denizci-Guillet & Ng, 2012). Jones and Sasser (1995) suggested that merely satisfying customers is not enough to retain their loyalty since satisfied customers are free to switch to another brand. Therefore, researchers emphasize the importance of an emotional bond between customers and a brand (Shimp & Madden, 1988), and brand love has been considered as a strong positive antecedent of behavioral intention (Alnawas & Altarifi, 2016; Wallace, Buil & de Chernatony, 2014). Even though researchers have discussed brand love widely in marketing studies, brand love and its relationships with other constructs have not been investigated adequately in the tourism and hospitality context. Therefore, the research objectives are to investigate the relationships among perceived value, satisfaction, brand love, and behavioral intention in the restaurant context; and to explore whether satisfaction and brand love make different contributions in forming behavioral intention.

Conceptual framework

Perceived value, satisfaction, and brand love

A myriad of studies have demonstrated that perceived value is a crucial antecedent of satisfaction (Chen & Chen, 2010; Williams & Soutar, 2009). Customers are more likely to feel satisfied when they perceive high value in tourism services (Bojanic, 1996; Yoon, Lee & Lee, 2010). Additionally, perceived value plays an important role in forming brand love since it can lead to customers' love for the firm (Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012). Brand love, as an emotion, could also be developed through high levels of satisfaction (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Therefore, this study proposed the following three hypotheses:

H1: Perceived value positively influences satisfaction.

H2: Perceived value positively influences brand love.

H3: Satisfaction positively influences brand love.

Satisfaction, brand love, and future behavioral intention

Researchers have put forward that higher levels of satisfaction can result in favorable future behavioral intention (Chen & Chen, 2010; Baker & Crompton, 2000). Since brand love can lead to the committed relationship between customers and a brand (Tsai, 2011), customers like to recommend and revisit the

places associated with their beloved brand (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Therefore, the following hypotheses were proposed:

- H4: Satisfaction positively influences intention to recommend.
- H5: Satisfaction positively influences intention to revisit.
- H6: Brand love positively influences intention to recommend.
- H7: Brand love positively influences intention to revisit.

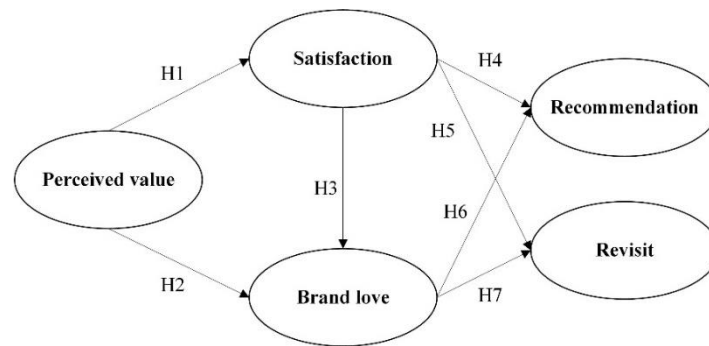


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Method

To test the seven hypotheses (Figure 1), this study collected 350 surveys from four cities in China, including Beijing, Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Suzhou from November 2014 to March 2015. The on-site questionnaire surveys were conducted right after customers had meals in fine dining restaurants, such as Grandma's Home and Tasty. The respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with each statement in the questionnaire according to a seven-point Likert scale: where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree. The measurement items for the three latent constructs (i.e. perceived value, satisfaction, and brand love) are shown in Table 1. Intention to recommend and intention to revisit are one-item constructs (Zeithaml et al., 1996): “I will recommend this restaurant brand to someone who seeks my advice” and “Next time I will dine out in this restaurant brand.” The final data set has 346 valid responses, and the demographic information of the respondents is shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Measurement items of perceived value, satisfaction, and brand love

Construct	Measurement item	Reference
Perceived value (4 items)	The restaurant experience was excellent value for money.	Harris and Goode (2004)
	I am happy with the value for money I get from the restaurant experience.	
	The restaurant services are excellent value.	
	The restaurant food is excellent value.	
Satisfaction (6 items)	I am completely satisfied with the restaurant service.	He, Li and Harris (2012)
	I am very pleased with the restaurant service.	
	I am absolutely delighted by their service.	
	I am completely satisfied with this restaurant's food.	
	I am very pleased with this restaurant's food.	
I am absolutely delighted by the food.		
Brand love (7 items)	This is a wonderful brand.	Carroll and Ahuvia (2006)
	This brand makes me feel good.	
	This brand is totally awesome.	
	I have no particular feelings about this brand.	
	I love this brand!	
	This brand is a pure delight.	
	I am very passionate about this brand.	

Note: The items in the survey were first designed in English. These items were translated into Chinese and back-translated into English to ensure consistency.

Table 2. Demographic information of the sample (N=346)

Characteristic	Percentage (%)	Characteristic	Percentage (%)
Gender		Income	
Male	52.8	Less than 3000RMB	12.7
Female	47.2	3001-6000RMB	45.4
Age		6001-9000RMB	21.1
18-24	9.8	9001-12000RMB	12.1
25-34	53.8	More than 12001RMB	8.7
35-44	25.4	Education	
45-54	10.7	High school or less	11.6
55 and above	0.3	College, including vocational school	26.9
		University	48.7
		Graduate school	12.8

The study followed the two-stage testing procedure recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). First, confirmatory factor analysis was used to estimate the measurement scale. In this step, two items of brand love were excluded because of insufficient loadings (factor loading < 0.6). The remaining items showed satisfactory construct reliabilities, which are larger than the cut-off point 0.7 (Table 3). The average variance extracted value (AVE) of each construct is greater than 0.5, showing a good convergent validity. Additionally, as all the square roots of AVE are larger than any correlation in Table 4, discriminant validity has been achieved (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Second, this study tested the seven research hypotheses in SPSS 20.0 and AMOS 21.0.

Table 3. Scale reliability of perceived value, satisfaction, and brand love

Construct and item	Std. coefficient	Construct reliability	AVE
Perceived value			
The restaurant experience was excellent value for money.	0.825	0.917	0.735
I am happy with the value for money I get from the restaurant experience.	0.908		
The restaurant services are excellent value.	0.859		
The restaurant food is excellent value.	0.836		
Satisfaction			
I am completely satisfied with the restaurant service.	0.722	0.923	0.669
I am very pleased with the restaurant service.	0.776		
I am absolutely delighted by their service.	0.743		
I am completely satisfied with this restaurant's food.	0.930		
I am very pleased with this restaurant's food.	0.902		
I am absolutely delighted by the food.	0.811		
Brand love			
This is a wonderful brand.	0.848	0.864	0.566
This brand makes me feel good.	0.880		
This brand is totally awesome.	0.762		
I love this brand!	0.627		
I am very passionate about this brand.	0.601		

Table 4. Correlations between perceived value, satisfaction, and brand love

	Perceived value	Satisfaction	Brand love
Perceived value	1		
Satisfaction	0.699	1	
Brand love	0.706	0.731	1

Note: $\sqrt{AVE_{perceived\ value}} = 0.857$, $\sqrt{AVE_{satisfaction}} = 0.818$, and $\sqrt{AVE_{brand\ love}} = 0.752$

Results

As shown in Table 5, the goodness-of-fit indices show that the proposed model has a good fit: GFI is 0.90, and CFI and IFI are all above 0.95 (Bentler, 1990); and RMSEA is smaller than 0.1 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Additionally, all the tested paths are statistically significant at 0.001 level, and all the standardized coefficients are positive, indicating that all the paths are supported and the constructs have positive relationships (Figure 2). The results also demonstrate the different predictive powers of each construct. Perceived value explains 50.4% of the variance in satisfaction but only explains 20.4% of the variance in brand love. Additionally, satisfaction and brand love explain 13.2% and 13.9% of the variance in recommendation, respectively, suggesting that they have similar predictive powers to recommendation. However, brand love (25.7%) has much greater predictive power to revisit compared to satisfaction (9.3%).

Table 5. Results of the model and goodness-of-fit indices

Hypotheses	Std. coefficient	t-value	R ²
H1: perceived value → satisfaction	0.710	11.328***	0.504
H2: perceived value → brand love	0.452	6.807***	0.204
H3: satisfaction → brand love	0.400	5.984***	0.160
H4: satisfaction → recommendation	0.363	5.296***	0.132
H5: satisfaction → revisit	0.305	4.871***	0.093
H6: brand love → recommendation	0.373	7.890***	0.139
H7: brand love → revisit	0.507	5.429***	0.257

Note: *** p<0.001; $\chi^2 = 335.068$ (df = 104), $\chi^2 / df = 3.222$, p<0.001; RMSEA= 0.080; GFI = 0.900; CFI = 0.956, IFI = 0.956.

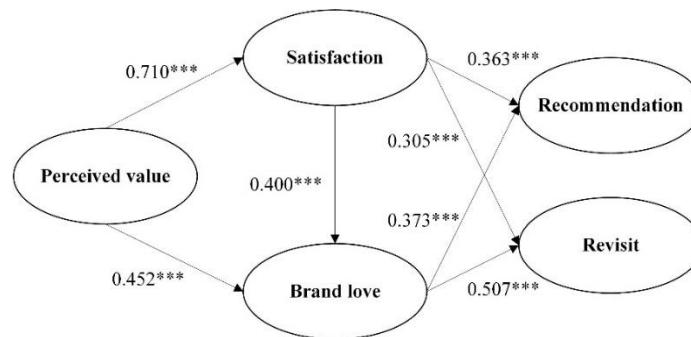


Figure 2. Results of the path analysis

Note: *** p<0.001

Conclusion and practical implication

This study demonstrates the relationships among perceived value, satisfaction, brand love, intention to recommend, and intention to revisit. The most important contribution of this study is to find the different contributions of satisfaction and brand love in forming behavioral intention. The findings show that satisfaction and brand love have similar effects on intention to recommend. However, the effects of brand love on intention to revisit are much greater than that of satisfaction. The implications for tourism service providers are as follows: for those that heavily rely on word-of-mouth marketing, satisfying customers is crucial because satisfied customers are more likely to express favorable comments. For those who need to retain repeat customers, simply satisfying them is not enough. Therefore, strategies, such as establishing an outstanding brand image and providing customer-oriented services, should be implemented to build an emotional bond between customers and the brand. Additionally, this study confirmed that perceived value can be used as a predictor of satisfaction and brand love. No matter whether a service provider focuses on gaining more recommendations or retaining customers, letting customers feel high perceived value should be in the first priority.

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